1364

THE

Merry Exploits

OF

POOR ROBIN,

THE

Merry Saddler

OF

WALDEN.

CONTAINING

Many merry Passages of his Life, of harmless Mirth, to lengthen out Pleasure, and drive away Melancholy.

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THE

Merry Exploits

OF

POOR ROBIN.

CHAP. I.

The Birth of Poor Robin. How he was bound Apprentice to a Saddler, and what a trick he play'd his Master.

POOR ROBIN was born in Saffron-Walden, in the County of Essex, of honest plain parents, who brought him up not as our nice dames do now a-days, by directing him how much he should eat, but as the fashion was then, full fed with gross meats; so that in a few years he grew a sturdy lad; and considering his growth and manners, a man might well say better fed than taught. His father being willing that he should be able to live in the world another day, bound him an apprentice to a Saddler, who was one that fitted Poor Robin's humour to a hair; for the master loving drink, he thought it should go hard if the man likewise did not wet his lips with it.

It

It happened one time his maſter had brewed a barrel of Beer ſtronger than ordinary, to the drinking of which Poor Robin one night invites five or ſix of his comrades, who, before the next morning drank it all up.

Poor Robin to excuſe himſelf, draws the ſpiggot out, and throws a pailful of ſmall beer and two or three pailfuls of water under the tap, and by a wile gets a great ſow into the cellar; ſo the next morning, when his maſter aroſe, all was quiet, and the ſow was blamed for what the boar-pig had done.

CHAP. II.

How Poor Robin ſerved his Maſter, for ſitting up late at Night.

POOR ROBIN's Maſter had gotten a cuſtom that the man did not at all like, which was, that after he had tippled all day, ſometimes till ten or eleven o'clock at night he would then come home and fall aſleep in a chair; during which time his man muſt not go to bed, but wait until his maſter awakened.

To break him of this evil cuſtom one night, when he came home ſoundly fuddled and fell ſound aſleep in his chair as uſual, Poor Robin made

made a great fire, and then draws his master's legs so near thereto, that his toes touched some of the coals; which being done, he sits down in the other corner to observe the sequel. He had not sat long till his master's shoes began to fry, whereupon he suddenly awakes, and jumps about, as if he had been mad; the man all the while counterfeits himself asleep, and seemed not to awake for a considerable time; at last seeming much to pity his master's sad misfortune, they went to bed. But never, after that, would his master sit up to sleep in his chair by the fire-side.

CHAP. III.

How Poor Robin served a rich Miser.

IN the same town lived a rich miser, who had wealth enough to have been treasurer of the town, and wisdom answerable to have made him fit for being beadle of a parish; this man, fuller of faith than good works, would neither feast the poor nor relieve their wants, nor yet the rich, to maintain brotherly unity. Poor Robin, who hated bad house-keeping as he hated the Devil, resolved to put a trick upon him. The time of the year (being then Christmas) made it fit for his purpose; and therefore counterfeiting himself to be the gentle-

gentleman's man, about ten or eleven o'clock at night, just when people were in bed he calls at sundry men's doors inviting them the next day to his master's (naming the gentleman's name) to dinner: whereupon the next day there appeared the number of two-and-twenty in their roast-meat apparel, but contrary to their expectations finding but small preparations for a dinner, they began to wonder wherefore he had invited them; the gentleman as much wondered wherefore they came: at last the cause was cleared on both sides: some laught and some frowned and so they all parted and went to their homes.

CHAP. IV.

How Robin Married, and set up for himself.

POOR Robin having served out his apprenticeship, proposed setting up for himself, and for that purpose hired a house and shop; yet considering it was inconvenient for him to live alone, and that two heads was better than one, he resolved so do as many others had done before him, to marry in haste, tho' he should repent at leasure. But yet his fortune was better than his deserts; for tho' she was but a homely woman with whom he

joined

joined in matrimony, yet she was provident to live in the world and for his own part he stood not much on beauty, but would rather have a fat purse than a fair wife, seeing there was great profit in the one, and less danger of being made a cuckold by the other.

Never did a couple more lovingly agree together, than did this pair at first, insomuch that duck and lamb were the ordinary terms he bestowed upon her; whereupon a wit of the town hearing this loving language betwixt them, made this epigram, to be read by any that can understand it.

Poor Robin thinks his wife excels most dames,
And calls her duck & lamb, with sweet kind names,
A duck's a bird, a lamb's a beast we know
Poor Robin's wife's a foul beast then I trow.

CHAP. V.

How Poor Robin served one of his Companions a slovenous Trick.

POOR ROBIN having set up for himself, as you have heard, he would oftentimes travel abroad into the country to get acquaintance amongst the gentry: It happened one time, being belated homeward, and his brain intoxicated with the juice of Bacchus, that he took

took up his quarters in a country ale-house, where, notwithstanding he had gotten a lusty jug before, yet he fell to drinking of beer and cyder as if his belly was bottomless; at last growing sleepy he went to bed, where it was his chance to be lodged in the same chamber where one of his acquaintances was already in bed who, as he had lien down sooner than Poor Robin so the next morning was he no sooner got up to provide a pot and tost against Poor Robin should arise, but a foul mischance befel Poor Robin in the mean time; for the wine, beer, and cyder not agreeing in his belly, he very unmannerly — sir reverance — besh it the bed!

Whereupon not knowing what to do, and being loath to be discredited, a crotchet came into his crown, which he presently put in execution. He first takes the stinking sheets from off his own bed, and lays them on his friend's, and then takes his and lays them on his own bed; so spreading the coverlet as if nothing was amiss, he makes himself ready, and down stairs he goes.

No sooner was he below, but his friend arrests him at Mr. Fox's suit, and by all means would make him pay his groat for being drunk. Poor Robin excused himself as well as he could, and would be judged by the landlord whether or not he was fuddled. Whilst they were wrangling about paying the groat the maid went up into the chamber to make the beds; but finding one of them in a pitiful pickle, she

came

came chafing down, calling the man beastly fellow, and nasty knave, with other Billingsgate language such as came first to her tongue's end; the man imagined her to be mad, thus to scold for nothing, till at last she told him in plain terms he had beshit the bed. Nay, quoth poor Robin I will be judged by my landlord, which of us was most needful the last night. Truly, said the host, I can judge no otherwise but that he was, else he would never have played such a nasty trick. Upon which it was judged by all the company that the man should pay his groat, and poor Robin go Scot-free.

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CHAP. VI.

Of a very sad Disaster that befel Poor Robin.

IT happened on a time during the late unhappy wars, that all the Essex Train Bands were assembled at Walden to resist the King's forces, who, in a bravado had made their excursions as far as Huntington; and, amongst other military weapons of destruction, they brought with them a Drake, which they planted just under Poor Robin's chamber-window, to be shot off at nine o'clock at night, for a warning for all people to repair home.—Poor Robin and his wife were at that time newly gone to bed; now it is to be understood, that

that the chamber where they lay, went out half over the room below, a rail of about four feet high being set up by the side to keep them from falling; close by which rail Poor Robin's bed was placed; the season then being warm, and Poor Robin apt for venerial exercises, he would needs have a touch upon crooket with his wife; but whilst they were busy at their sport, the drake was shot off, which Poor Sarah, his wife, hearing, in a marvelous fright gave a sudden start, and threw Poor Robin quite over the rail into the room below, and very foully bewrayed the bed. Poor Robin was very much bruised in body, and half dead.—At length he got up, but his courage was so cool'd with the height of the fall, that he had more need of a Doctor than a woman.

CHAP. VII.

How Poor Sarah was cheated of her Mutton-Pye.

POOR Sarah on a time had made a very great pye, wherein she had put a whole loyn of mutton, besides store of other meat, so that it was valued to be worth five or six shillings at least; this pye she sent to the com-

common oven to bake; which being perceived by three or four merry blade they resolved if possible to cheat her of the pye; which at last they brought to pass in this manner: At the time the baker used to draw, two of them went and held poor Sarah in a tale, whilst the other sent one of her neighbour's boys to the baker's with a pail, a napkin and money to pay for the baking. The baker suspecting no knavery, delivered the pye to the boy, which was presently carried to the next alehouse; whither inviting some more of their companions unto them, they eat up the pye with much mirth and laughter; and that the jest might be publicly known they set the town-crier to work, who published the same through every street.

CHAP. VIII.

How Poor Robin kiss'd his Wife's backside instead of her mouth.

POOR ROBIN having been out very late one night, his understanding being eclipsed, he happened to mistake himself, and went in at the foot of the bed instead of the head of it; and remembering that he had offended his wife by his most imprudent conduct, to appease her anger

he falls to kiſſing her poſteriors, imagining it had been her mouth; but finding the platform bigger than his face he aſked her the queſtion if her cheeks were ſwell'd? She for anſwer returns him a foiſt, which makes him to aſk her again if her breath did ſtink? Whereupon ſhe burſt into a very great laughter, and let ſuch a crack that the grains flew about his face! Whereupon turning himſelf on the other ſide in a great rage, You beaſtly queen, quoth he, muſt you ſpit in my face; the devil himſelf may kiſs you e'er I'll kiſs you again.

CHAP. IX.

How Poor Robin eat Dog-ſtones inſtead of Lamb-ſtones.

AS Poor Robin was more addicted to eating fleſh than fiſh, ſo of all ſorts of fleſh he loved a diſh of lamb-ſtones beſt. A merry-diſpoſed companion, knowing his appetite, reſolved to put a trick upon him. A gentleman of the town who kept a pack of hounds; having gelded his dog, he gets the ſtones, and with a few ſweet-breads preſents them to Poor Robin, as a dainty diſh. Poor Robin, very thankful for ſo great kindneſs, would not delay, but would preſently have their dreſt; making

making all the haste he could, for fear any should come in to be partakers with him in his dinner; but having eaten them and understood the truth, he fell a-pewing as if his gall would come up with it: poor Sarah, in like manner, disgorged her stomach, that who should have seen them would have concluded them drunk with eating.

CHAP. X.

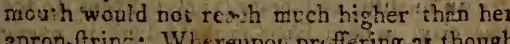
A witty Jest that Poor Robin gave a Serjeant.

THE blue regiment of train soldiers being on a time at Walden, one of the Serjeants, to shew his bravery, had gotten a great blue scarf about his middle, being as much or more than the Ensign had in his colours. Therefore Poor Robin, thinking him to be too fine to fight, would venture to put a jeer upon him, and calling him, asked if he wanted any work?—Why, quoth the serjeant, what makes you ask? O cry you mercy, quoth Poor Robin, I was mistaken in you, I took you for a shoemaker, because you had gotten your blue apron before you.

CHAP. XI.

How Poor Robin won Five Skillings by kissing his Hostess.

POOR Robin, with some other of his mates, being drinking in an ale-house, where was an exceeding tall hostess, one of them proffered to lay five shillings, that Robin would not kiss her as she stood on the ground, he being of low stature. Poor Robin, nothing daunted at his words, accepted the challenge, and covered the money: but when he went to kiss her, his mouth would not reach much higher than her apron-string: Whereupon proffering as though he would put his hand under her coats, he made her stoop to put it by; then he clasping his arms round her neck, gave her a kiss, and so won the wager.



CHAP. XII.

Poor Robin's Sayings of ambitious Men.

POOR Robin being in company with some gentlemen who were talking warmly of the ambition of some men now a-days, that would venture the loss of their souls for the gain,

of a kingdom. Yea, quoth Poor Robin, but the ſucceſs of many of them is far different from king Saul's; for he, ſeeking aſſes, found a kingdom; but they, in ſeeking a kingdom, find themſelves to be aſſes.

CHAP. XIII.

Poor Robin's Journey to London.

POOR ROBIN having never been at London in his life, and being very deſirous to ſee the city, whoſe fame rang ſo loud in every one's mouth, he reſolved to make a journey thither, and ſpend ſome time in viewing the rarities of the ſame; but becauſe he was unacquainted with the cuſtoms of the city, he got a companion of his to go along with him.

No ſooner were they got paſt Aldgate, but Poor Robin, ſeeing ſuch a number of ſigns, he whiſpered to his friend. Certainly, quoth he, they muſt needs be all drunkards that live in this place; I never ſaw ſo many ale-houſes together in my life: and thereupon beckoning to his companion, enters one of the ſhops and calls for a jug of beer; but they making him acquainted with his error, how they ſold no drink, but if he wanted any thing elſe they could furniſh him with it, he then preſently, without any ſtudying, aſks them to ſhew him

a

a pair of hedging gloves; whereupon changing their opinion, instead of a fool they took him for a jeering companion; and to fit him for his gloves, took him to the pump, and soundly bedrencht him from head to foot.

Poor Robin and his companion when passing through Birching-Lane, on being ask'd by the Salesmen Countrymen what lack you? Marry, quoth Robin, that which I fear you cannot furnish me withal: and being importuned of them to know what it was: Why, quoth he, that which you have none of, I want honesty.

Night approaching, Poor Robin and his walking-mate repaired to their Inn, where, after they had supt, and drunk five or six juggs of beer with the host of the house, and some of his men [for innkeepers' servants drink most of their beer at other people's cost] his friend loving no Tobacco, and Poor Robin desiring the heathenish weed, to pass away the time, they agreed among themselves that every one of the company should either tell a tale or sing a song. Poor Robin, who first proposed the same, began in the following manner.

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CHAP. XIV.

A Tale of a Pack of Cards.

NOT many ages since the Parson of a certain country village was accused to a Committee

mittee that he was a great gamester at cards, being so addicted thereunto, that he would oftentimes play on Sundays.

The Committee being thus informed, sent forthwith for the Parson, for to answer to this accusation; who receiving the warrant, made no excuse nor delay, but with all haste made his appearance before them; with him also came the informer, to justify his accusation.

Being thus met together, the Committee began to scold the Parson that one of his calling should be addicted to such a vice, as to be noted for a common player at cards.

Indeed, said the Parson, I am so far from it, that I know not what a pack of cards meaneth. Sir, quoth the informer, if you please to search his pockets, I believe you will find a pack there at present, for he seldom goeth without such tackling.

Whereupon the Committee commanding his pockets to be searched, they found a pack of cards there indeed; but the Parson denied that they were cards, saying They may be cards to you, but to me they are an Almanack. And it being demanded how he could make that to appear, he answered thus.

First, quoth he, here is as many suits of cards as there be quarters in a year, and as many court cards as there be months in a year; as many cards as there be weeks in a year, and as many spots as there be days in a year —

Then,

Then, when I look upon the King, it puts me in mind of the allegiance that I owe to my sovereign lord the King. Looking upon the Queen, puts me in mind of the same allegiance that I owe to the Queen. The Ten puts me in mind of the Ten Commandments, the Nine of the Nine Muses, the Eight of the Eight Altitudes, the Seven of the Seven Liberal Sciences, the Six of six days we ought to labour, the Five of the Five Senses, the Four of the four Evangelists, the Three of the Trinity, the Two of the two Sacraments, and the Ace, that we ought to worship but one God.

Quoth the Committee, if this be all the use you make of them we can find no fault with you: but Mr. Parson, of all the cards that you have nominated, you have forgot the Knave; pray what use make you of him? O Sir, said he, pointing to his accuser, that, I suppose, is your Worship's informer.

Poor Robin having ended his tale, says his friend, I suppose that was the same Parson that used to read his Littany every day of the week, excepting Sunday; and I being a constant hearer of him, learned it as perfectly as my Pater Noster.

CHAP. XV.

Poor Robin's Littany.

FROM being turned out of doors,
From town-rats, and ale-house score,

From

From lowſie queans and pockey whores,
Libera nos.

From taylors' bills, and drapers' books,
From ſluttiſh maids, and naſty cooks,
From froward wives, and crabbed looks,
Libera nos.

From breaking pipes, and broken glaſſes,
From drinking healths, and drunken aſſes,
From lying lubbers, and liſping laſſes.
Libera nos.

From paying of Lawyers fees,
From mouldy bread, and muſty cheeſe,
From trotting jades, and ſcorning ſhes,
Libera nos.

From fetters, chains, bolts and gyves,
From pointleſs needles and broken knives,
From thieviſh ſervants and drunken wives,
Libera nos.

From taylors' bodkins and butchers' pricks,
From tenpenny nails and headleſs ſpikes,
And from attornie's knaviſh tricks
Libera nos.

From being taken in diſguiſe,
From believing of a Poet's lies,
And from the devil and the execiſe,
Libera nos.

From brown bread and ſmall beer,
From being taken ſtealing deer,
From all that hath been named here,
Queſemus te.

The Littany being ended, the tapſter comes for his reckoning; but Poor Robin made this anſwer

nſwer, that he ſhould do as the reſt had done, ither tell a tale or ſing a ſong. Says he, ng I cannot, but I will tell you how they harry in Scotland, as a Scotch Prieſt that lay here told me, and got me to engage for him o my maſter, for twenty ſhilling, and he unning away, I was forced to pay his ſcore for him.

CHAP. XVI.

A Scotch Marriage.

WE don't uſe to wad in Scotland as you wad in England; Jockey comes to the Kirk, and takes Sir Donkyn by the rocket, and ſays, Good morn Sir Donkyn. What's the matter, Jockey, what's the matter?—— A wadding, a wadding! ſays he. Don't you ſee the merry hoppers and the ſkippers and all the lads of the jovial gang? I'ſe don't, I'ſe come to you belyve. Then Sir Donkyn gangs to the kirk. I ſpee, and I ſpee wha a-deel do you ſpee? Jockey of the high lane, and Jenny of the long cliff: if any know why theſe twa may not be now wadded together, let them now ſpeak, or hold their tongue for ever after this. Now, Jockey, wilt thou hae Jenny to thy wadded wife? I ſay, Jockey, ſay after me: Jockey, wilt thou hae Jenny to thy

thy wedded wife; forſaking all boon, lubber-loons, ſwing bellied calves, black lips and blue noſes? Ay forſooth. If theſe twa be not as well wadded as e'er I wadded twa theſe ſeven years, the deel and St. Andrew part them.

The wedding being ended, all the company went to bed, where we will leave them till the next morning, to relate Poor Robin's perambulation about the city.

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CHAP. XVII.

Poor Robin's perambulation about the City.

NO ſooner did Apollo begin to appear in the eaſtern horizon, but Poor Robin, ſhaking off melancholy ſleep, rouſed his companion to prepare himſelf for their intended perambulation; and having armed themſelves with a pot of nappy ale, they took their firſt walk to ſee the Royal Exchange, a moſt magnificent ſtructure, built by Sir Thomas Greſham. From thence they then went to take a view of Leadenhall, but the exceeding bravery of the Exchange had ſo dimmed the beauty of the place, that it was nothing pleaſing to Poor Robin's eye; he made no tarrying there, but went preſently down to the Tower, where having

having ſeen the lions, and from the Wharf taken a ſuperficial view of the bridge as alſo the ſhips upon the river Thames, grew weary of beholding ſuch trivial matters as theſe.—He had however far more content in this than in any thing he had ſeen before, ſo admirably pleaſing to his fancy it was to ſee how theſe little pretty things hopt about.

But leſt he ſhould take a ſurfeit with ſuch raviſhing delights, his friend perſuaded him to go to ſee the ancient Cathedral of St. Paul's, it being at that time made a horſe guard by the ſoldiers; which Poor Robin beholding, What a bleſſed reformation, quoth he, have we here! for in our country we can ſcarce perſuade men to go to church, but here come men and horſes too.

But having quickly ſatisfied himſelf with the ſight of St. Paul's, they would in the next place go to viſit Weſtminſter, the rather becauſe it was at term time, where beholding ſuch a number of Lawyers in their gowns, he roared out, Good God ſend me ſafe out of this place! for if two or three make ſo great quarreling in our town, what a noiſe will all theſe make?

A country gentleman who overheard him, made the following remark; I remember, ſaid he, I once heard a ſtory of a certain nobleman that went down to hell, wherein he beheld men of all profeſſions, ages and conditions, ſaving only Lawyers, which made him the more

more to wonder, because he imagined them all there, and asking the devil the reason, he made this reply, we have them here, tho' you see them not, but we are forc'd to keep them in a room by themselves, lest they should set all the devils in hell at variance. Poor Robin laughed very heartily at this tale, and having now satisfied his inn, and having discharged all reckonings his friend and he returned home with t.. greatest expedition.

o—o—o—o—o—o—o—o—o—o—o—o

CHAP. XVIII.

Many odd Whimsies and Conceits of Poor Robin.

POOR Robin daily frequenting the tavern and ale-house had learned of his companions many drunken whimsies and other odd conceits, as the five properties that belong to an host, that he must have the head of a stag, the bag of a nag, the belly of a hog skip up and down like a frog, and fawn like a dog. As also the four ingredients whereof a woman's tongue is made, viz. The sound of a great bell the wagging of a dog's tail, the shaking of an aspen leaf, tempered with running water.

When poor Robin had gotten a cup in his crown, as it oftentimes happen'd, he would be then playing the poet, and nothing but rhymes could then come out of his mouth: for as one writes,

Poet and pot doth differ but one letter,
And that makes poets love the pot the better.

Amongst other of his conceits, this following comparison was much used by him.

Like a purse that hath no clink in't;
Or a cellar and no drink in't;
Like a jewel never worn,
Or a child untimely born,
Like a song without a foot,
Or a bond and no hand to't,

Sich doth ſhe ſeem unto mine eyes,
That lives a Virgin till ſhe dies.

The money doth entice the purſe.
The drink in the cellar quencheth thirſt;
The jewel decks if worn it is,
The child ſoon dies abortive is;
The foot o' the ſong doth ſweeteſt ſound,
The hand doth make the party bound.
So ſhe that marries e'er death takes her,
Compleats that for which God makes her.

Women ſaid he, are all in extremes either too willing or too wilful, too forward or too froward; and too courteous or too coy; too friendly or too fiendly; he meant, they always meanly account of. This made one Arminius, a ruler in Carthage, refuſe to marry; ſaying, If I marry a wife, ſhe will be wilful; if wealthy, then wanton; if poor, then peeviſh; if beautiful, then proud; if deformed, then loathſome: and the leaſt of theſe is fully ſufficient to kill a thouſand men.

FINIS.